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Thurgood Marshall College Fund and Association of College and University Educators Launch National Initiative to Strengthen HBCU Online and Blended Instruction

Thousands of public HBCU students at 12 participating institutions to benefit from evidence-based instruction delivered by more than 650 ACUE-credentialed faculty; Initiative supported with \$1.4 million in grants from the Bank of America Foundation, Education Finance Institute, and ECMC Foundation.

Washington, DC and New York, NY (June 2021) – Out of a shared commitment to strengthen the quality and equity of higher education, today the [Thurgood Marshall College Fund \(TMCF\)](#) and [Association of College and University Educators \(ACUE\)](#) announce the *Excellence in Online Instruction* initiative. This comprehensive project will:

- **Create a network of 12 TMCF member institutions**, all of which are public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or Primarily Black Institutions (PBIs), focused on excellence in online, blended, and in-person instruction.
- **Prepare and credential over 650 HBCU faculty**, to the benefit of thousands of students, through [ACUE's evidence-based courses](#) leading to the only nationally recognized [collegiate teaching credential](#) endorsed by the American Council on Education ([ACE](#)).
- **Support strategic planning** vis-à-vis the role of faculty in student success efforts and **strengthen the capacity** of institutional research.
- **Conduct a longitudinal study examining the effects of evidence-based instruction on student outcomes**, including rates of course completion, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status; [numerous recent and independent studies](#) find **closed equity gaps** among students taught by ACUE-credentialed faculty, with sustained effects, relative to comparison data.

“ACUE is the national leader in effective collegiate instruction. No other organization has ACUE’s proof of impact or earned as much trust and respect,” said **Dr. Harry L. Williams, president & CEO of TMCF**. “TMCF’s members have made instructional quality a top priority, whether online, in-person, or in a blended format. Good teaching through personalized relationships is another reason why public HBCUs are seeing historic increases in enrollment. When our member schools asked for support to further invest in their faculty, we went to the ‘best in class.’ ACUE has an excellent track record of working with, and co-developing its programs, with HBCUs.”

“ACUE’s commitment to student success and equity is unwavering. At a time when so many students are struggling to persist in their studies, we are pleased to initiate the first phase of a partnership with TMCF,” said ACUE CEO **Scott Durand**. “The nation’s public HBCUs hold a critical place in providing low-income and first-generation students with access to higher education, and we are honored to be their and TMCF’s partner.”

Both Williams and Durand expressed their deep gratitude to the Bank of America Foundation, the Education Finance Institute, and the ECMC Foundation for their generous support.

“This award will have an immediate positive impact on our institution and indicate to students that there are increasing efforts by more faculty to improve our online teaching to them. To achieve equity in higher education for minority students, it is important to fund other Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), where resources can affect transformational change,” said **Dr. H. Michael Dreher**, associate provost at Medgar Evers College—CUNY, a participating institution.

Over time, TMCF seeks to expand this effort to all of its 47 members. The inaugural 12 institutions, selected this past spring through a competitive process are:

- **Alabama State University**
- **Albany State University (GA)**
- **Bowie State University (MD)**
- **Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CA)**
- **Harris-Stowe State University**
- **Medgar Evers College—CUNY (NY)**
- **Norfolk State University (VA)**
- **Southern University Law Center (LA)**
- **Tennessee State University (TN)**
- **Virginia State University**
- **West Virginia State University, and**
- **Winston-Salem State University (NC)**

This initiative deepens ACUE commitment to public and private HBCUs and PBIs. Other institutions that have partnered with ACUE include Bennett College, Delaware State University, Dillard University, Elizabeth City State University, Florida A&M University, North Carolina A&T State University, North Carolina Central University, Prairie View A&M University, and York College—CUNY. Faculty are credentialed in effective teaching practices through programs based on more than three decades of research.

About the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF): Established in 1987, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is the nation’s largest organization exclusively representing the Black College Community. TMCF member-schools include the publicly-supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Predominantly Black Institutions, enrolling nearly 80% of all students attending Black colleges and universities. Through scholarships, capacity building and research initiatives, innovative programs and strategic partnerships, TMCF is a vital resource in the PK-12 and higher education space. The organization is also the source of top employers seeking top talent for competitive internships and good jobs. TMCF is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable organization.

About the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE): The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) promotes student success and equity through quality instruction. In partnership with colleges, universities, higher education systems and associations, ACUE prepares and credentials faculty in the evidence-based teaching practices that improve student achievement and close equity gaps. Numerous and independently validated studies confirm that students are more engaged, learn more, and complete courses in greater numbers—more equitably with their peers—when taught by ACUE-credentialed faculty. ACUE’s online, cohort-based credentialing programs are delivered through institutional partnerships and open enrollment courses endorsed by the American Council on Education.

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